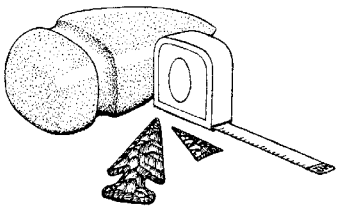


Archaeology In Your Community

This publication will provide the reader with a brief introduction to archaeology that is taking place in the State of Indiana. The science is vibrant, there are professional and avocational archaeologists involved, and much remains to be learned about the previous (and current) cultures who have inhabited our state.

If you would like more information about archaeology in your area, or in the State, feel free to contact Amy Johnson, Archaeology Outreach Coordinator, at 317/232-1646.

Did You Know . . . ?

Did you know that archaeology happens in Indiana, and that archaeological projects are being conducted probably more often than you may think!

*"Archaeology **isn't** digging up dinosaurs, and it isn't exactly like what you might see in popular movies."*

Archaeology **isn't** digging up dinosaurs, and it isn't exactly like what you might see in popular movies. Archaeology **is** the careful, systematic recovery of information related to our past. Archaeology is conducted in various types of settings: academic, government, and cultural resource management, for example.

Indiana has a rich and varied history. Archaeological sites have been identified in every county in our state, and even though a very small percentage of the state has been investigated by professional archaeologists, over 47,000 sites have been recorded. Archaeological sites can be things like historic cabin sites, Native American earthwork sites, canal and other transportation related sites, and many more. Through the science of archaeology we can learn so much about past and current cultures. The citizens of our state feel that these types of resources are worthy of preservation, and as a result, archaeology sites are protected by state law in Indiana.

WHAT TYPES OF THINGS ARE BEING DISCOVERED IN INDIANA?

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM WHAT IS FOUND AND STUDIED?

What follows are just a few examples of recent archaeological projects, conducted by various groups, which have taken place in our state. These will highlight various areas of Indiana, as well as the types of information which are being gathered as a result of these projects.

The Lick Creek African American Settlement- submitted by Angie R. Krieger, Heritage Resource Specialist, Hoosier National Forest

Lick Creek was a pioneer community of free African Americans located within the Hoosier National Forest in Orange County, Indiana. In 1811, many of these free citizens traveled with abolitionist

(Continued on page 2)

Indiana Department of Natural Resources

Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology
402 W. Washington St., Room W274
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2739

317/232-1646 ; Fax 317/232-0693
webpage http://www.ai.org/dnr

HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND ARCHAEOLOGY

DNR
Indiana Department of Natural Resources

(Continued from page 1)

Quakers from North Carolina to escape racial persecution. Settlers purchased land from the Government in this upland region and blacks and whites successfully farmed the land side-by-side until the mid- 1860s. By 1855 African Americans owned 1,600 acres of land. The peak population of free African Americans was 260 in 1860.

Very little visible evidence remains of this settlement today. The farmsteads, Union Meeting House, African Methodist Episcopal church, and cemetery created by these early settlers exist primarily as archaeological sites. Ongoing surveys are conducted to locate associated farms. Historical documents such as Freedom Papers, Negro Register, land deed records, probate inventories, birth and death records, etc. provide incredible depth and color to the lives of these people.

In 2000 and 2001, test excavations were conducted at the farmsteads of African Americans Elias Roberts and Mathew Thomas respectively. The archaeological evidence revealed Elias and Nancy Roberts lived in a house typical of southern Indiana homes of the period. It was a 5 x 6 meter single pen timber sided log house with an end chimney and perimeter sandstone/limestone foundation.

Workers and visitors at the Elias Roberts homesite, summer 2000.

Artifacts uncovered included glass bottles and ceramic plate fragments, a glass cup-plate, ornate glass buttons, clay tobacco pipes, a spectacle lens, pewter ring, and slate pencils. These items confirmed the fact that the Roberts were well-to-do farmers as indicated in the historical record. The presence of the slate pencils supports the notion that their house was used as a school as indicated in the 1840 population census. Results of the 2001 excavation of the Mathew Thomas farmstead are pending.

Numerous partnerships have been created to conduct this research. To date, we have worked with archaeologists affiliated with Hoosier National Forest, Indiana State Museum, Ball State University and Indiana University Purdue University-Fort Wayne. Volunteers from the local communities have donated countless hours. Students from Paoli High School created a video documenting their research on free blacks in Orange County and the Underground Railroad. In addition, we have participated in USDA's Historically Black Colleges and Universities Comprehensive Program to provide minority students opportunities to be involved in archaeological survey, excavation, and historical document research.

This research is the beginning of a multi-year "community study" that will involve excavations at many sites to develop an archaeological database that can allow an in-depth analysis of community pattern and provide comparative data for answering questions about free black life in the rural north

Did you know that recorded archaeological investigations have been taking place in our state for over 170 years?

Did you realize that there are currently over 47,000 recorded archaeological sites in Indiana? Some of these sites are even so significant, both locally and nationally, that they have been included in the Indiana Register of Historic Sites and Structures and/or the National Register of Historic Places. Each site contributes to our knowledge about past and current cultures in various and unique ways.

There are a number of ways to become involved in archaeology. Familiarize yourself with the people (and resources) in the archaeology community who can help. Perhaps you may wish to become involved with one of the avocational archaeology groups active in the state. These groups advocate the wise collecting of artifacts and the proper recording of sites.

Indiana Department of Natural Resources
Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology
402 W. Washington St., Room W274
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2739

317/232-1646

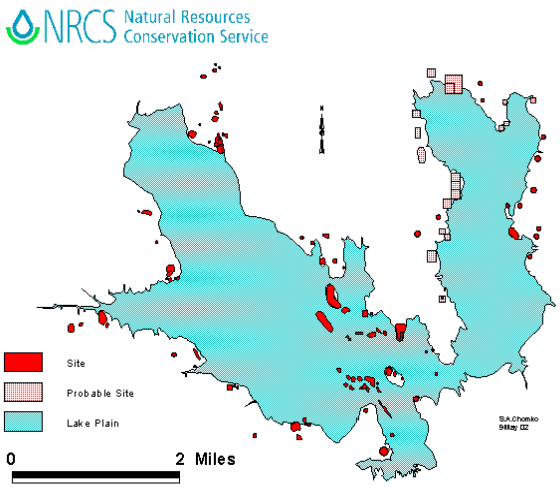
HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND ARCHAEOLOGY

DNR
Indiana Department of Natural Resources

The Blackwater Marsh Cultural Resources Inventory

submitted by Steve Chomko,Cultural Resources Specialist, Natural Resources Conservation Service

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in cooperation with Wilder Farms, Inc., is restoring over 7000 acres to wetland conditions in Greene County, southwestern Indiana. The project encompasses two areas, Beehunter Marsh and Goose Pond that were part of Blackwater Marsh, a large wetland formed in a glacial lake plain. Numerous attempts were made to drain the marsh in the 19th and 20th century to make the land suitable for agriculture. In the early 19th century, the area was a complex mosaic of wetland, grassland, savanna, and forest communities forming a diverse ecological biome. Marsh dominated the lake plain and was interspersed with a mixed hardwood community of white and pin oak, black maple, beech, elm, white ash and swamp cottonwood (see land office survey records on file, Indiana State Archives). The modern vegetation is a mixed woodland forest community dominated by sycamore and black walnut along drainages, pine forests on strip-mined areas, with the remaining areas under cultivation until A.D. 2000. These cultivated lands are now fallow.



Distribution of sites in and around the Blackwater Marsh formed in a glacial lake bed.

The area of the proposed undertaking, in the Wabash Lowland, is a flat, poorly drained basin or lake plain surrounded by low moderately eroded hills in the western portion of the county. The major drainages, Black Creek and Brewer and Hamilton ditches are part of the Black Creek catchment basin, eventually draining to the south into the White River. Very poorly drained soils of the Montgomery-Booker-Zip association dominate the low lying areas of the lake plain.

As part of the restoration efforts, NRCS conducted a cultural resources inventory of the areas identifying 47 archaeological sites and two engineering structures. Thirty-eight sites were located during the survey and nine sites and both structures were revisited to update the documentation. Twenty seven properties are recommended as eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. As might be expected, prehistoric sites were located on low hills in the lake plain and on the adjacent uplands. However, 16 prehistoric sites were located in the lake plain on very poorly drained soils (Booker Clay or Montgomery Silty Clay Loam). These sites are on low (generally less than 20 cm) rises above the lake plain associated with either relic drainages and or modern natural channels. Temporal affiliations span the middle Archaic through late Woodland periods. Most assemblages appear to represent resource procurement and processing activities, but diverse tool types and quantities of debris on two sites are suggestive of multiple or complex activities or habitation.

An archaeological site during documentation. Pin flags mark artifact locations.

A site during recent heavy rains imitating the site setting prior to drainage of the marsh.

NRCS is designing the restoration to avoid the significant properties in the uplands. Sites in the lake plain will be protected from permanent impoundment. Planting of warm season grasses and seedlings and natural revegetation will stabilize site deposits protecting them for the future.

Indiana Department of Natural Resources
Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology
402 W. Washington St., Room W274
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2739

317/232-1646

Late Prehistoric Period Population Dynamics and Other Research Topics -

submitted by Dr. Robert McCullough, Director, Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne Archaeological Survey

The Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne Archaeological Survey (IPFW-AS), under the direction of Dr. Robert McCullough, is now focusing its research on population changes during the Late Prehistoric period in Indiana. Last summer, with partial funding from the DHPA, their field school conducted investigations at two enclosure sites thought to be Late Prehistoric: the Scranage enclosure in Dekalb County and the Strawtown enclosure in Hamilton County. Excavations at the Scranage enclosure revealed a banked, circular palisade with an exterior ditch, which dates between 1030 and 1260 AD, but little evidence of a prolonged occupation was found. At Strawtown, there is a ditch encircling an intensively occupied 13th- to 14th-century village, possibly with a central plaza. The Strawtown investigation was a collaborative effort with personnel from Ball State University and also was an Indiana Archaeology Week event, which attracted volunteers statewide. All materials recovered from Strawtown eventually will be housed in a new interpretive facility being planned by the Hamilton County Parks Department.

This year, the IPFW-AS field school returned to both sites. At Scranage, excavations centered on a possible structure within the enclosure and on another segment of the stockade to determine its construction sequence. At the Strawtown site, the area outside the enclosure was surveyed, and test excavations were placed within the enclosure to test whether there was a stockade wall. Again this fall, excavations at Strawtown will be open to volunteers and the public during Archaeology Month. These ongoing investigations hope to clarify the nature of the interactions among several farming communities known to be present in central Indiana during the Late Prehistoric period.

Prehistoric pottery fragment found during recent archaeological investigations.

In addition to the Late Prehistoric research, Nikki Waters, field and laboratory supervisor at the IPFW-AS, completed a DHPA grant-funded report titled "An Archaeological Survey and Evaluation of Rock Shelter Resources within the Peter Cave Hollow Region of the Hoosier National Forest, Perry County, Indiana." This report proposes a new method for classifying rock shelters, a new methodology for investigating them, and a preliminary database of all known rock shelters sites within Indiana. As of May 2002, Andy White joined the Archaeological Survey, adding his specialties in hunting and gathering societies and statistical modeling to the professional interests of the staff.

In recognition of the Archaeological Survey's research initiatives, as well as the opportunities it provides for students to gain professional experience in archaeology, IPFW recently named the Survey one of its Centers of Excellence. Along with research initiatives and education, the IPFW-AS provides cultural resource management services to a variety of clients and maintains a state-approved curation facility.

Did you know that Indiana has a law which protects archaeological sites? The Indiana Historic Preservation and Archaeology Law (Indiana Code 14-21-1) protects archaeological sites and human burial sites regardless of their location on state or private lands. All archaeological sites dating before December 11, 1816 are protected under this act, as are buried human remains dating before 1940. As a result of the passage of the law, and increased public awareness of it, important archaeological sites are being investigated and protected. Individuals conducting illegal excavations have been convicted, and the word is out that Indiana does not tolerate disrespect for the past and our irreplaceable archaeological resources.

The past belongs to us all, so please help do your part to protect these fragile sites. If you see, or know about, illegal digging, contact your local law enforcement agency or the Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology. Together we can make a real difference!

Indiana Department of Natural Resources
Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology
402 W. Washington St., Room W274
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2739

317/232-1646

HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND ARCHAEOLOGY

DNR
Indiana Department of Natural Resources

Archaeology at the Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology (DHPA)- submitted by Amy L. Johnson, Research Archaeologist and Archaeology Outreach Coordinator

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology (office of the Indiana State Archaeologist) is the lead archaeological agency in Indiana. Four full time archaeologists in this office serve the state in many ways through their various duties both in the office and in the field. Our in-office duties range from reviews of projects (which may affect archaeological sites) mandated by state and/or federal laws, answering the public's questions, recording site locations, maintaining the state archaeological database, conducting research, and much more.

The public might come in contact with the DHPA archaeologists in their communities in various ways. For example, each year the DHPA receives an average of ninety (90) reports of either violations of the archaeology law (IC 14-21-1), discoveries of artifacts or human remains, or requests for permits for archaeological investigations. These discoveries may take the form of accidental encounters of artifacts or remains during the course of ground disturbing activities, purposeful disturbance of these resources, or vandalism (looting) of sites. When reports of these types of activities occur, our staff work with the law enforcement division of the Department. Usually field investigations are necessary, and these often bring the staff into contact with members of the public, the landowner, and sometimes the media.

A member of the DHPA staff distributing archaeology educational materials and posters to interested members of the public.

Indiana's State Archaeologist teaching a course about archaeology for members of the public.

The Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology (DHPA) is authorized by state statute to conduct a program of education in archaeology. We are committed to providing a quality program of education which includes educational materials and opportunities for the public. Our state's most comprehensive yearly outreach event, Indiana Archaeology Month, provides opportunities for the DHPA archaeologists to go around the state to various events which are held. At these events, the public can talk to our archaeologists about recording their site locations, questions they may have about archaeology, and many other topics.

Staff member screening for artifacts at a prehistoric site in Hendricks County.

Training by the DHPA is offered to professionals in many fields and to the general public. Managers and stewards of public properties are also afforded training to protect archaeological sites on public property. The archaeology staff also provides technical assistance to private landowners to protect sites on their properties.

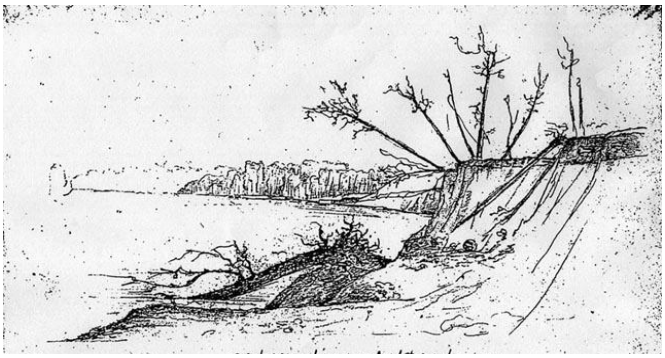
The archaeology staff give talks and presentations on a multitude of archaeological, historical, and preservation topics and issues. These are presented to a great variety of public and private groups and entities. When our other duties allow, the archaeologists at the DHPA are able to conduct research and field investigations related to various archaeological topics. As part of a National Park Service project, the staff recently assisted with the recording of several battlefield and historic fort locations in Indiana related to the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812. Efforts such as these

Did you know that thousands of projects are reviewed each year by the Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology? These reviews help ensure that the projects' activities won't negatively impact archaeological sites or historic structures. Each year archaeologists with cultural resource management firms, universities, etc. survey thousands of acres of Hoosier land and document hundreds, and sometimes thousands, of archaeological sites.

Indiana Department of Natural Resources
Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology
402 W. Washington St., Room W274
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2739

317/232-1646

Bone Bank Archaeological Site (Posey County): Indiana's First State-Funded Rescue Excavation- *submitted by Cheryl Ann Munson, Department of Anthropology, Indiana University*

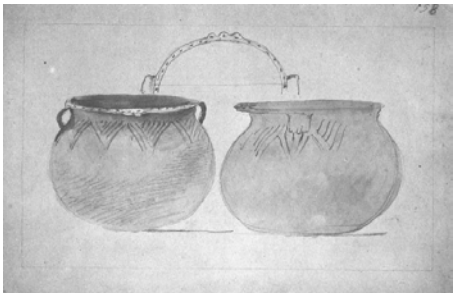


C.A. Lesueur's drawing (no. 41194) of the profile of the Bone Bank site and bones that have eroded from a higher level. The profile of the site looks much the same today, except that the bank is located hundreds of meters to the east, and human bones are no longer evident.

The Bone Bank archaeological site (12 Po 4) on the banks of the Wabash River in Posey County has been washing away since before this part of the state was surveyed by the U.S. Government. The site became a landmark in the early 1800s for river travelers because of the many burials that were exposed by erosion. The burials and artifacts also caught the attention of early scholars and artifact collectors. The first archaeological excavation in Indiana, and one of the earliest in the U.S., was carried out at Bone Bank in 1828 by the French naturalist Charles Alexandre Lesueur while he was based in the town of New Harmony.

Thanks to Lesueur's drawings of artifacts and notes about the site, plus artifact collections that were acquired by the Museum of American Indian, archaeologists determined that the site was one of the main villages of the late Mississippian Caborn-Welborn culture, whose territory was centered around the Mouth of the Wabash from ca. AD 1400-1700, or just prior to Pioneer American settlement of the region. The site itself was a large village built on a terrace, but low-lying sloughs and a backwater lake connected the villagers to the nearby Wabash. By the late 1800s the cemeteries at Bone Bank had disappeared, and archaeologists thought the site had been destroyed.

In the 1990s, Cheryl Ann Munson's reconnaissance work along the Wabash identified intact cultural deposits – pottery sherds, rock, flint, animal bone – exposed in the riverbank at Bone Bank and buried by up to 3 meters of washed in silt. Systematic surveys and testing in 1997-1999 identified and mapped a long but narrow band of cultural deposits along the exposed bank – the last remnants of the site. Surveys and testing were supported by National Park Service grants from the Historic Preservation Fund to Indiana University, as well as by matching funds from Indiana University and private donors; grants were administered by the Indiana Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology. Testing discovered a storage pit on high ground, plus five probable baking pits at the south, lower end of the site, near the former backwater lake. All the pit features contained carbonized plant remains, which could provide information on Caborn-Welborn subsistence practices. Detailed mapping showed that what little remained of the site was being diminished with each flood.



Lesueur's drawing (41207) shows two side views of a jar with incised decorations typical of the Caborn-Welborn Decorated pottery type. Opposed strap handles and sets of multiple nodes are usual types of attachments on this type of jar.

In 2000 and 2001, rescue excavation work at Bone Bank was funded by the Wabash River Heritage Corridor program, in conjunction with matching funds and the cooperation of Gray Farms, Inc., the landowners, volunteer workers, and donated equipment. The Four Rivers

A human effigy bottle and a long, narrow, flint knife blade in Lesueur's drawing 41212 of Bone Bank site artifacts shows specimens similar to effigy bottles and stone tools found in the Mississippi River Valley of Missouri, Arkansas, and Tennessee. The object at the top is unknown.

(Continued on page 7)

Indiana Department of Natural Resources
Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology
402 W. Washington St., Room W274
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2739

317/232-1646

(Continued from page 6)

Resource and Conservation District provided grant administration, and Indiana University

supplied the archaeological research team. Portions of two middens — or refuse dumps — were excavated at the north and south ends of the site.

Unfortunately, no more lakeside pit features were found. In the center of the site, only a few prehistoric postholes and pit features remained, plus several buried historic features (part of a split rail fence, and refuse-filled gullies).

Recovered materials from the rescue excavations are dominated by thousands of pieces of pottery, including fabric impressed fragments, plus plant food remains and stone tools. Bone Bank site is the first Caborn-Welborn village with deep deposits to have large-scale stratigraphic excavation samples. Analysis of recovered materials is ongoing to examine changes over time in ceramics, use of plant foods, and characteristics of fabrics. Radiocarbon dates should soon be available. Flooding in spring 2002 washed away more of the site. For more information and photos, see: http://www.indiana.edu/~archaeo/bone_bank/

Survey of the eroding riverbank and the buried cultural zone at the south end of the site. The cultural zone has a distinctly darker soil which dips sharply into lake deposits. The lake at Cypress Slough is now mostly filled in by river silts.

Excavation of buried midden deposits, Fall 2000, North Block.

This publication was compiled by Amy L. Johnson, Research Archaeologist and Archaeology Outreach Coordinator, Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology (DHPA), 2002. The DHPA wishes to thank those archaeologists who contributed their articles and images for inclusion in this document.

This product has been financed in part with federal funds from the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, as administered by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology. However, the contents and opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of the Interior, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation by the U.S. Department of the Interior. Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the U.S. Department of the Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, or disability in its federally assisted programs. If you believe that you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility as described above, or if you desire further information, please write to: Director, Office of Equal Opportunity, National Park Service, 1849 C Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20240.

Indiana Department of Natural Resources
Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology
402 W. Washington St., Room W274
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2739

317/232-1646

HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND ARCHAEOLOGY

DNR
Indiana Department of Natural Resources